

is a very important accomplishment not just for my State but for all Americans.

Many of us feel that our transportation infrastructure is the key to our continued economic viability in this country. Many of us have been very concerned that we have shortchanged that infrastructure by putting money in other areas.

What Senator GRAMM and what Senator BYRD did today was to assure that we are going to have the money that people pay in their gasoline taxes each day when they go to work, assure that it comes back in the form of a user fee to help ease the transportation congestion in our urban areas and to make it easier to access our rural areas in this country.

I commend Senator CHAFEE and Senator BAUCUS for working with Senator GRAMM and Senator BYRD to come out with a very fair agreement that will benefit everyone. I especially thank also Senator DOMENICI, the chairman of the Budget Committee, for helping to make sure that would happen without busting the budget caps because that is also our responsibility as stewards of our Nation.

I think we had a very important agreement, and I look forward to voting for this agreement tomorrow on the floor. I think everyone will be pleased that we are going to have the money that is paid every day by Americans, that 4.3-cent-per-gallon gasoline tax, go right where it should go, and that is to ease our transportation byways and highways and the transit systems that keep us from having congestion and environmental pollution in our cities.

Mr. CHAFEE. Madam President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Texas for her very kind comments. We appreciate those remarks.

She is absolutely right. The senior Senator did do a splendid job not just for his State but all the trucks coming and going in connection with the NAFTA agreement, particularly the border crossings down in her State. We are pleased things came out the way they did. We look forward to her support when we bring the bill up on the floor.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. If the Senator from Rhode Island would yield, I am happy he mentioned the corridors, the trade corridors, that were also included in the recent agreement.

As we have opened our trade with Mexico, it has caused a huge congestion on the NAFTA corridors that come through my State but also through other States that are on the border and also up into the rest of our country.

I am very pleased you have allocated an extra amount for wear and tear because it will ease the congestion and stop some of the long delays that we are seeing at the border because we don't have enough bridges and gateways. This will help alleviate that and make it even easier to trade with our neighbor to the south.

Mr. CHAFEE. Madam President, I have seen those jams down there. I have seen them in California by Tijuana. The trucks were all lined up. It is incredible. I saw a little bit of it in Texas, but that was just a sampling of what later has occurred as the NAFTA agreement has come into full flower with the jam-ups on both sides of the border, trucks trying to come across, customs inspectors trying to do their job. It truly is tremendously congested.

Both Senators from Texas are absolutely right in addressing this problem.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I rise today to talk about a point of history as well. That is to commemorate, today, from 162 years ago, Texas Independence Day.

Each year I look forward to March 2. This is a special day for Texans, a day that fills our hearts with pride. On this day, 162 years ago, a solemn convention of 54 men, including my great great grandfather Charles S. Taylor, met in the small settlement of Washington-on-the-Brazos. There they signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. The declaration stated:

We, therefore . . . do hereby resolve and declare . . . that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign and independent republic . . .

At the time, Texas was a remote territory of Mexico. It was hospitable only to the bravest and most determined of settlers. After declaring our independence, the founding delegates quickly wrote a constitution for the new born republic. Then they organized an interim government.

As was the case when the American Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, our declaration only pointed the way toward a goal. It would extract a price of enormous effort and great sacrifice.

While the convention sat in Washington-on-the-Brazos, 6,000 Mexican troops were marching on the Alamo to challenge the newly created republic. Several days earlier, from the Alamo, Col. William Barrett Travis sent his immortal letter to the people of Texas—and to all Americans. He knew the Mexican Army was approaching. And he knew that he had only a very few men to help defend the San Antonio fortress. Colonel Travis wrote:

Fellow citizens and compatriots: I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man—the enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword if the fort is taken—I have answered the demands with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the wall—I shall never surrender or retreat.

Then, I call on you in the name of liberty, of patriotism and of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days.

If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country—Victory or Death. William Barret Travis, Lt. Col. Commander.

What American, Texan or otherwise, can fail to be stirred by Col. Travis' resolve? In fact, Col. Travis' dire prediction came true—45,000 Mexican troops laid siege to the Alamo. In the battle that followed, 184 brave men died in a heroic but vain attempt to fend off Santa Anna's overwhelming army, but the Alamo was crucial in Texas independence. Because those heroes at the Alamo held out for so long, Santa Anna's forces were battered and diminished.

Gen. Sam Houston gained the time he needed to devise a strategy to defeat Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto, just a month or so later, April 21, 1836. The Lone Star was visible on the horizon at last.

We Texans continue to commemorate the heroic times during which we won our independence, when we existed as a republic and finally joined the Union.

Each year, on March 2, there is a ceremony at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park where there is a replica of the modest cabin where the 54 patriots laid down their lives and treasure for freedom.

Each year, as close as possible to March 2, I read Colonel Travis' letter to my colleagues in the Senate, a tradition started by Senator John Tower. This is a reminder to them and to all of us of the pride Texans share in our history and in being the only State that came into the Union as a republic.

Mr. President, I am pleased to continue the tradition that was started by Senator Tower because we do have a unique heritage in Texas where we did fight for our freedom. Having grown up in the family and hearing the stories of my great-great-grandfather, it was something that was ingrained in us—fighting for your freedom was something that you did. We did it for Texas and we have done it for America.

I think it is very important that we remember the people who sacrificed, the 184 men who died at the Alamo, the men who died at Goliard, who made it possible for us to win the battle of San Jacinto and become a nation which we were for 10 years before we entered the Union as a republic.

Now we fly both flags proudly—the American flag and the Texas flag—over our capital. I am very pleased to once again commemorate our great heritage and history.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUPPORTING IMF REPLENISHMENT

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I rise to discuss the President's request